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THE MEDICAL LANGUAGE OF ST. LUKE.

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DR. HOBART, in his well-known book on the *Medical Language of St. Luke*, refers to an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1841 (p. 585), as the earliest notice on the subject with which he was acquainted; and Dr. Plummer refers to the same article, in his *Commentary on St. Luke*, as perhaps the earliest notice of this characteristic of the evangelist with which we are concerned. But it is of interest to observe that nearly a century earlier than this article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* one of the greatest of New Testament editors and commentators, J. J. Wetstein, had drawn attention to the medical accuracy of Luke in his gospel and in Acts (see under Luke 14:2; Acts 28:8). And earlier still another illustrious commentator, J. A. Bengel, had remarked the same characteristic in his comments on Luke 8:43; Acts 3:7. A succession of German writers has drawn attention to the same subject, and Dr. Zahn, in his recent *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Vol. II, p. 427), has borne generous and ungrudging testimony to the value of Dr. Hobart's book. Among recent English writers Professor Ramsay, in his *St. Paul the Traveler* (p. 205); Dr. Plummer, in his *Commentary on St. Luke* (pp. lxiii-lxvi); and Sir John Hawkins, in his *Horae Synopticae* (p. 184), have drawn special attention to the same book, and have recognized that the author's main point has been abundantly proved (see further *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 9 f.).¹

¹ Of the writers who support the thesis maintained in the following pages we may mention the following Roman Catholic scholars: Hug, Kaulen, Belser, Knabenbauer, and Fouard; and, in addition to the English scholars already named, there are J. Smith, of Jordanhill, Trench, Alford, Humphry, Lightfoot, and, more recently, Salmon, Page, Headlam (art. "Acts" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*), Bebb (art. "Luke, Gospel of," *ibid.*), Rendall, Lumby, Farrar, Pullan, Rackham; see also HACKETT, *Commentary on Acts*, p. 341. It is a matter of regret that Renan has not

An endeavor will be made in the following pages to take some leading instances in Luke's gospel and in Acts, and to subject each alleged medical term to the tests demanded by Dr. Plummer: Is it used in the LXX? Is it employed in classical Greek? We may commence our inquiry with a few passages in which we have the advantage of comparing Luke's words with those employed in parallel passages by Matthew and Mark.

The healing of Simon's wife's mother is narrated by all the synoptists: Luke 4:38, 39; Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30. Matthew and Mark both use the same word, *πυρέσσουσα*, "sick of a fever;" Luke says *συνεχομένη πυρετῷ μεγάλῳ*, "holden with a great fever." It may be admitted that the verb *συνέχεσθαι* is often used with *νοσήματι* in classical Greek in a similar sense, and that it is so found in Josephus. But it may be observed that both it and the simple verb *ἔχεσθαι* are constantly used by the medical writers as in this passage; that in Acts 28:8 we not only have it joined with *πυρετός* as here, but we also have its simple form joined with *δυσεντερία*, just as in Hippocrates we have the phrase *ὑπὸ δυσεντερίας ἐχομένῳ*; and that we also have in the passage before us the familiar distinction drawn in medical writings between a great and a slight fever, upon which Zahn equally with Hobart lays stress. Moreover, here as so often elsewhere, Luke introduces his characteristic word *παράχρημα*. In the New Testament this word occurs eighteen times, but sixteen of these instances are in Luke's writings. The word is not only frequent in medical writers like Hippocrates and Galen, but it is used by them in a manner analogous to its use by Luke, *i. e.*, it is constantly associated with recovery from sickness or the contrary, and closely joined with medical terms. From one writing of Hippocrates Hobart cites, as Zahn reminds us, no less than sixteen instances of the employment of the word. No doubt it must be admitted that the adverb is found several times in the LXX, and that it is of frequent occurrence in the best Attic prose. But still it is significant that its employment in the New Testament is almost exclusively confined to given us more than a general statement, but it is significant that he speaks, not only of Luke as having the title of "physician," but also of his writings as proving his

Luke, and that in eleven out of sixteen passages it is associated by him with disease and death.

Luke's next chapter (chap. 5) supplies us with two cases in which we may again compare his words with those of his brother-evangelists. While Matthew and Mark describe the leper who seeks the aid of Jesus by the same simple term *λεπρός*, Luke (5:12) has the significant phrase *πλήρης λέπρας*, peculiar to him in the New Testament. The adjective is no doubt characteristic of Luke, but it is in frequent use in connection with disease, as, *e. g.*, with leprosy, both in Hippocrates and Galen. There is no parallel phrase in the LXX, although *λέπρα* is constantly used, and the phrase "a leper as white as snow" is applied to Miriam and to Gehazi. A few verses later we have a description of the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum. Here, as elsewhere, Matthew and Mark have the popular form *παραλυτικός*, "a paralytic;" Luke, alone of the New Testament writers, here and always has the technical term *παραλελυμένος*, "a man that was palsied" (in 5:24 Westcott and Hort read in the margin *παραλυτικῶ*), and so in Acts 8:7; 9:33. From no less than four medical writers, as Zahn again points out, are parallels adduced by Hobart to a use of the expression in the sense of the passage before us. The only other passage in the New Testament in which the word occurs is Heb. 12:12, where it is evidently used metaphorically in a quotation from the LXX; *cf.* also Eccles. 25:23, which is evidently a quotation (as in Hebrews) from Isa. 35:3. It must be admitted that in 1 Macc. 9:55 we have the expression *καὶ παρελύθη* used of Alcimus, and in 3 Macc. 9:22 *τοῖς μέλεσι παραλελυμένος* of Ptolemy Philopator; but the fact remains that not only in Acts, but in narratives which we can parallel, as here, with those of the other synoptists, Luke used a technical medical term, and that, too, absolutely. Moreover, in Luke's narrative we have not merely the characteristic *παραχρῆμα*, but also one of the four words for "bed" which he employs, a word used by him alone, *κλινίδιον* (5:19). Luke, in fact, uses two words for the bed of the sick, in common with Matthew and Mark; but in addition to them two other words, peculiar to his writings, *κλινίδιον* and *κλινάριον*, the former

occurring twice in this narrative (5:19, 24), and the latter in Acts 5:15.

It cannot be said that the employment of diminutives is characteristic of Luke, as is sometimes alleged (whether rightly or wrongly) of Mark; nor can it be maintained that the two diminutives in question are borrowed from the LXX, for neither of them is found there. Both the words are classed by Dr. Kennedy as "colloquial," and they both occur in Aristophanes; but there are distinct instances, as Hobart shows, of the reference of both words to the couch of the sick. And so the fact remains that in the writings of the evangelist who is known to us as Luke the physician we have no less than four words used to denote, as the context almost invariably proves (except in Luke 8:16; 17:34, where *κλίνη* is used quite generally), the beds of the sick.

While our Lord is apparently still in Capernaum he enters on another sabbath into the synagogue, where there was a man whose right hand (*ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ ἡ δεξία*) was withered, Luke 6:6. Luke alone, unlike the other evangelists, mentions the right hand, *ἡ δεξία* being added emphatically after *χεὶρ* (*cf.* Acts 3:7). Zahn notes the significance of this point, especially as it was customary with medical men to state whether the right or left member was affected.

In Luke 8:27-39 the healing of the demoniac of Gerasa is described by Luke, as also by the two other synoptists. It was once remarked to the writer by an Oxford scholar of high standing that, if medical language was characteristic of any writer in the New Testament, it was so of Mark rather than of Luke; and it is no doubt true that Mark introduces many terms for which parallels can be found in medical writers, as we can see by glancing down the references in Wetstein. It is also true that in the miracle before us, and perhaps more notably still in the healing of the demoniac boy after the Transfiguration, the details are given by Mark with a vividness and fulness which are very striking. But this constant introduction by Mark of little points of detail may be fairly accounted for by the fact that Mark, as there is good reason to believe, received his

account from Peter, an eyewitness; and the fact still remains that Luke also is able to introduce details here, as elsewhere, peculiar to himself, and details, too, which are quite characteristic of a medical man (see Zahn, *u. s.*, and Hobart, p. 17). To take one point only: neither of the other evangelists mentions that the disease had lasted a long time (*ἐκ χρόνων ἱκανῶν*), a fact which might naturally claim the attention of a physician, as intermittence was mentioned by Aretæus among the notes of mania, and a fact quite in accordance with Luke's invariable custom to give us, as Zahn again notes, the period of the duration of the malady in those who were afflicted.

The case of the Gerasene demoniac is quickly followed in Luke's gospel by the cure of the woman with an issue of blood. Here again it might be fairly urged that Mark, in the parallel 5:25 (not Matthew), uses an expression which is quite medical, the identical expression, in fact, used by Luke 8:43, *οὕσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος*, "having an issue of blood." But note what follows: while Mark tells us that the fountain of her blood was dried up (*ἐξηράνθη*, 5:29), Luke, using again the medical phrase *ῥύσις αἵματος*, tells us that the issue of her blood staunched (*ἔστη*, 8:44). He thus not only employs *ἰσθάναι* in a sense in which it is found in no other New Testament passage, but he also introduces a distinct medical term, used especially, as by Hippocrates and Galen, of such bodily discharges as are mentioned here, in place of what Zahn calls the poetical expression of Mark.

There is perhaps no miracle in the account of which we are more sensible of the graphic and circumstantial details of Mark than in the healing of the demoniac boy as our Lord descended from the Transfiguration glory. But we must not forget that Luke introduces some striking words in his narrative which are not found in the other gospels. For example, Luke describes the spirit as tearing the boy that he foameth (*μετὰ ἀφροῦ*, 9:39). Here we have a word used only by Luke in the New Testament and not found in the LXX, but employed in classical Greek sometimes as here, and often also by medical writers, as by Hippocrates and Aretæus, in describing the symptoms of epilepsy.

Again, Luke alone introduces the word *ἐξαίφνης*, "he *suddenly* crieth out," a word which Zahn no less than Hobart regards as a term which Luke would naturally introduce from its constant employment in medical language in connection with spasms and paroxysms. It is true that the word occurs several times in the LXX, and that Mark uses it on one occasion (13:36), but Luke has it four times in his writings, and it occurs in only these five passages in the New Testament. Other terms in the narrative are also noted by Zahn as medical, *e. g.*, *ἐπιβλέπειν*, "to look upon," used by Luke in the account of this miracle and in 1:48. The verb is found once, it is true, in James 2:3, but in a different sense. It was used also in the LXX (Tobit, Judith) of regarding with pity. But it was also constantly employed by Galen (see J. Weiss, *in loc.*) of examining the appearance and condition of a patient, and it might therefore be fitly chosen by Luke in this connection.

There is another miracle of healing which is common, not only to Luke and the other synoptists, but to John as well. In Gethsemane, on the night of the Passion, Peter strikes with his sword a servant of the high-priest and cuts off his right ear. All four evangelists record the effect of the sword-cut, but Luke alone tells us how Jesus touched the ear and healed it. Dr. E. A. Abbott, in his elaborate account of the miracles of St. Thomas of Canterbury (1898), informs us in his last chapter that, even if the saint's miracles of healing or restoring members of the body could be accepted, yet the similar miracle attributed by Luke to Jesus in the narrative before us must be rejected. And his first reason for this rejection is that the three other evangelists omit the record of the healing. But it is surely significant that this mention should thus come from the medical evangelist only; in Zahn's judgment we cannot attribute this fact to chance, and J. Weiss, in his commentary, notes that "only Luke the physician has the healing" (Luke 22:50). Moreover, if the insertion had been due to a later tradition or to legend, we should have expected to find such a notice, not in Luke, but in a much later gospel, the gospel of John (see further, in reply to Abbott, Plummer, *Commentary on St. Luke*, p. 545).

In addition to the miracles already mentioned, it must not be forgotten that there are others peculiar to Luke. Among the few detailed accounts of restoration to life in the gospels, Luke alone gives us the raising of the widow's son at Nain. In this narrative, Luke 7:15, as also in Acts 9:40, but nowhere else in the New Testament, we have the verb *ἀνακαθίζειν*, "to sit up." Hippocrates, Aretæus, Galen, all use the verb in this intransitive sense, which is rare, to describe patients sitting up in bed. The verb does not occur in the LXX, but it is used by Plato in the middle voice, *ἀνακαθιζόμενος ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην* (*Phædo*, c. 3, p. 60b), in the same sense. Dr. Plummer refers to the medical use of the verb, although he only reckons it among the doubtful cases (*op. cit.*, p. lxxv). But the fact remains that we have here a word which is frequently used by medical writers (so Grimm-Thayer, *s. v.*), used once, if not twice, by Luke alone in the New Testament in its characteristic medical sense and verbal form. Moreover, the whole phraseology of the evangelist in narrating this miracle should be fairly taken into account (on which see Hobart, *in loc.*).

In the healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity, Luke 13:11-13, the verb *ἀνακύπτειν*, "could in no wise lift herself up," is peculiar to Luke in the New Testament, at all events in connection with disease. Not only is it just the kind of term which a medical man would employ, but it is associated with other noticeable verbs in the immediate context. Galen uses the verb for the straightening of the vertebræ of the spine (closely joined with *ὀρθόω*, *cf.* *ἀνορθόω* below), and Hippocrates uses the noun *κύφος* or *κύφωμα* for a curvature of the spine, and also the verb *λύειν* for its removal; *cf.* *ἀπολύειν*, "thou art loosed" (vs. 12), only here in the New Testament of disease. The same verb is used twice in the LXX, but in the sense of lifting up or throwing back the head.

One other verb claims attention: *καὶ παραχρῆμα ἀνορθώθη*, "and immediately she was made straight." The verb *ἀνορθόω* is frequently found in the LXX, but almost always in a figurative sense, and never, as frequently in medical writers, in connection with disease. See its similar use in the only other New Testa-

ment passage in which it occurs, Heb. 12:12. Dr. Plummer declines to class this word and ἀπολύειν as in any sense medical terms, but in commenting *in loc.* he points out that Hobart has shown that the verb is used by medical writers of straightening abnormal or dislocated parts of the body (*cf.* the use of ὀρθός by Luke alone, Acts 14:10). It would seem, therefore, that we have a series of terms which a medical man would be likely to use, and that added to this we find, not only the characteristic παραχρήμα, but another frequent characteristic, the mention of the length of time the disease had lasted (for other instances see Hobart, Zahn). In the next chapter of his gospel Luke (14:2) speaks of a certain man who had the dropsy. The incident is peculiar to his narrative, and in his description he uses, as J. Weiss notes, the technical word of the medical writers, ὕδρωπικός. The term is employed also by Aristotle and Polybius, but it is not found elsewhere in biblical Greek, although the disease is referred to (Numb. 5:21 f.).²

But Luke's medical phraseology may be traced, not only in the miracles of his gospel, but in familiar sayings and incidents common to him and to one or other of his brother-evangelists, or in sayings peculiar to him. It must, for instance, always remain an interesting fact that our Lord's quotation of the saying, "Physician, heal thyself," to which parallels may be found in Jewish and also in medical literature, is given us by Luke alone, 4:23 (and for instances of the use of specific medical terms see Zahn, *u. s.*).

One of our Lord's sayings, made familiar to us by all three synoptists, tells us: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. 9:12 and Mark 2:17 both give us the saying in identical Greek terms, while Luke 5:31 introduces the verb ὑγιαίνειν, "to be whole," a common word, no doubt, both in the LXX and in classical Greek, but also the distinctive medical term for being in good health, in contrast to νοσεῖν. The verb ὑγιαίνειν is used only three times in the gos-

² Zahn, as well as Hobart, emphasizes the fact that Luke's medical bias may be seen in the words which he abstains from using as well as in those which he employs (*cf.* HOBART, p. 61).

pels, and each time by Luke in this its primary sense (*cf.* 7:10; 15:27); elsewhere in the same sense (3 John, vs. 2), and frequently by Paul in his later epistles. Dr. Plummer, who cannot be accused of failing to test each word which can by any possibility be claimed as medical, thus comments *in loc.*: "For οἱ ὑγιαίνοντες Matthew and Mark have οἱ ἰσχύοντες. This looks like a deliberate change made by Luke for the sake of a word which would more definitely express health as opposed to sickness. Like παραλελυμένος for παραλυτικός (5:18, 24), and ἰάσθαι for διασώζειν (6:19), these changes may be the result of Luke's medical training" (*cf.* Salmon, *Introd.*, p. 29, and Zahn, *u. s.*).

The present writer has elsewhere³ drawn attention to the remarkable *combination* of words which is found in Luke's rendering of the familiar saying, 18:25, as compared with the language of the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, and it may be sufficient to add the following notable passage from Professor Nestle's *Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*, Eng. tr., p. 275: "The evidence in support of the readings τρήματος (eye) and βελόνης (needle) is very strong (⌚ B D L). The choice of the terms τρήμα for τρύπημα or τρυμαλιά and βελόνη for ραφίς betrays the language of the physician." Another familiar saying, common to Matthew and Luke, in which Dr. Plummer admits a term as perhaps accounted for by medical phraseology, is given by the former evangelist (23:9), αὐτοὶ δὲ τῷ δακτύλῳ αὐτῶν οὐ θέλουσι κινῆσαι αὐτά, "they themselves will not move them [*i. e.*, the burdens] with their finger." Luke, in recording previously a similar saying (11:46), writes, "ye yourselves do not touch them (προσψάετε) with one of your fingers (δακτύλων)." The verb used by Luke is not found in the LXX, although it occurs in a few cases in classical Greek; but it would probably have been familiar to Luke, as the simple verb ψάειν is several times found in Hippocrates, with or without δάκτυλος, of a gentle touch or pressure of the body, as distinct from πιέζειν, of a heavier pressure, while its compounds προσψάειν and παραψάειν were also current medical terms (so Hobart).

Among the terms upon which Dr. Zahn lays special stress is

³ *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 9 ff.

Luke's use of the verb ἀτενίζειν, "to look steadfastly." The verb is found no less than fourteen times in the New Testament, of which twelve instances are in Luke, and the remaining two in Paul. References can no doubt be given to its employment by Aristotle, Polybius, and Josephus; but it was also a favorite word with medical writers to describe a peculiar, fixed look (see instances from Hippocrates, Aretæus, Galen, in Hobart, p. 76). It would, therefore, be the kind of word which a medical writer might naturally introduce to denote an earnest, fixed gaze. And thus it is noticeable that Luke introduces it (22:56) in a passage which finds a parallel in Mark 14:67. One of the maids in the high-priest's palace sees Peter warming himself, and "she looked upon him (ἐμβλέψασα αὐτῇ)," says Mark; but Luke says, "she looked steadfastly upon him (ἀτενίσασα αὐτῷ)." The two instances of LXX usage which Hatch and Redpath give (1 Esd. 6:28; 3 Macc. 2:26) do not help us, because this verb is employed in these two cases in a secondary sense; but in Aquila, Job 7:8, it is employed in its primary meaning of "beholding," "gazing with the eye."

One of our Lord's most familiar parables is that of the Sower, given us by all three synoptists. Now, without laying stress upon the descriptive part of the parable in Luke's gospel, in which both Zahn and Hobart trace medical terms, we may turn for a moment to the explanation of the parable, which is also found in all three writers. The man who receives seed among the thorns allows the cares of this world to choke the seed, "and he becometh unfruitful;" so Matt. 13:12 and Mark 4:19 in precisely similar Greek terms. But when we turn to Luke 8:14 we find quite a different expression: "and (they) bring no fruit to perfection (οὐ τελεσφοροῦσι)." Here is a word, not only peculiar to Luke in the New Testament, but not found at all in the LXX, although it occurs apparently in a metaphorical sense in 4 Macc. 13:19. It must be admitted that the verb is used precisely in the same sense as here of the growth of plants by Theophrastus, Strabo, Josephus. But its frequent medical use is supported by passages from Aretæus, Dioscorides, Galen; and, although it is no doubt employed by them of

women and animals bringing their young to maturity, it is also used, exactly as by Luke, of fruit and seed coming to perfection; *e. g.*, Dioscorides, *Mat. Med.*, V, 2, uses it so of the vine (see J. Weiss, *in loc.*).

But while these and other similar passages may fairly be adduced in support of our position, it is no doubt true that some of the alleged instances must be subjected to very careful sifting. For example, in the concluding passage of the Sermon on the Mount, as compared with the corresponding passage in the sermon given us by Luke, Dr. Zahn emphasizes the language of Matt. 7:26 f., when placed side by side with that of Luke 6:48 f. The latter introduces in this one passage four words which do not occur either in Matthew or elsewhere in the New Testament, but which are of frequent occurrence in medical writers. The word *πλήμυρα*, "flood," occurs in the LXX, although only once, in Job 40:18(23); but it is found in Josephus, in Philo, in Plutarch, and its cognate forms occur in classical Greek. The verb *συνέπεσε* (Westcott and Hort, R. V.) is no doubt used by medical writers of the collapsing of the body or of some members of it; but it is also found, according to high authority, in Job 4:14, *τὰ ὀστέα συνέπεσεν*; it is used in the same connection by Plato, and also in classical Greek of the falling together, falling in, of a house. The verb *προσέῤῥηξεν*, "against which the stream *brake*," is undoubtedly employed by medical writers of the rupture or bursting of veins, and it is not found in the LXX or in classical Greek in the connection before us, but it is used once by Josephus in the active voice, and by M. Antoninus in the passive voice of waves broken against a promontory. The noun *ῥήγμα*, "the *ruin* of that house," is not used in this sense either in the LXX or in classical Greek, although in the latter it is used of bodily fractures or ruptures, and so technically in medical writers of the laceration or rupture of the body; but it may be noted that it is found in the LXX (Amos 6:11) of rents in a building (so Plummer). It is evident, therefore, that each of the four words cited by Zahn, in agreement with Hobart, must be used with great caution. But here, as elsewhere, it may still be admitted that it is the *combination* of medi-

cal terms which is noticeable (*cf.* Luke 18:25; Acts 11:5), although, no doubt, in some cases they are employed in a secondary sense; as also the fact that *the same phraseology is not found in parallel passages in the other evangelists.*⁴

[*To be concluded in the next number.*]

A Meditation.

Phil. 3:14. "I press toward the mark."

There is a decided distinction between perfection of progress and perfection of attainment. Paul was striving after perfection of attainment. He already was making progress. He said: "Not as though I had already obtained, either were already made perfect."

Paul depended largely on his personal example and influence, as well as his words, in helping others. "Brethren, be imitators together of me and mark them who so walk even as ye have us for an example." Our mutual influence over one another can become our strongest ally. We should make all our influence and work tend to soul-development, "going on unto perfection." Money is quite essential in this age, but that consideration should be entirely secondary.

The larger the soul, the larger the capacity for enjoyment, not only here, but hereafter. We *can* be what we *will* be. Let each one believe that it is possible by the grace of God in Christ to be what God intended he should be. As we advance, advancement becomes more possible, even necessary. The more we widen our field of vision, the more we take in of God and his truth. The more we exercise our God-given faculties, the stronger and more enduring will become the fibers of our spiritual natures. Paul's motto is indeed a noble one: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

EMORY L. COLE.

BAD AXE, MICH.

⁴ Luke's medical phraseology may be traced in the narratives and parables peculiar to him (see Hobart and Zahn, *u. s.*). Zahn draws attention to the significant fact that in Luke's account of our Lord's birth terms are frequently used which are specially characteristic of medical writing.